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THE STORY OF THE PEACEFUL VALLEY PROJECT



BY ROBERT R. WARK AND KATHLEEN S. WARK



The Valley in Spring, Catherine Dunlap and Dale Warick — Kay Wark

Kathleen S. Wark/Robert R. Wark

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THE STORY OF PEACEFUL VALLEY

by Robert R. Wark and Kathleen S. Wark

PREFACE

The Peaceful Valley Project is concerned primarily with improving the quality of life for the elderly disabled and terminally ill in central Alberta. A secondary concern is the preservation of a small but beautiful scenic area. The project was conceived to achieve these objectives by a combination of government and private resources. These three concerns — care for the elderly, conservation, and the economic partnership of the public and private sectors in support of philanthropy — are currently of much interest to many people. This book is a historical account of how one project combining these interests came to be. It was written by Robert Wark using a detailed day-by-day log of the undertaking kept by his sister, Kathleen Wark.

At an early stage in the development of the project, Kathleen consulted many individuals and institutions concerned with the care of the elderly disabled and terminally ill. She invited those who felt so inclined to write to the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation which was considering becoming involved. Excerpts of many of these letters have been added to the text for the "human" dimension. Peaceful Valley is, after all, an undertaking for people and by people.

A third focus of the book is visual — views of the site and the abundant flowers on the property as well as events and people important in the development of Peaceful Valley. The principal photographer, Kathleen Wark, gratefully acknowledges the assistance she received from members of the former Department of Botany, now the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta, for their role in identifying the flora. The reference text used for identification was *Wild Flowers of Alberta* by R.G.H. Cormack.

The authors are also deeply grateful for the editorial assistance from Donna von Hauff, always patiently given and well-informed, as well as for her invaluable work during layout of the book for the printer and seeing it through the press.

— *Kathleen S. Wark / Robert R. Wark, January 1996*

EDITOR'S NOTES

The story of how the Peaceful Valley Project began as the dream of a brother and sister, and grew to involve individuals, institutions, the Alberta provincial government and one of its foundations is both remarkable and, in this day and age, inspiring. For Bob and Kay Wark to see their dream realized — a day park suited and equipped for the elderly disabled and terminally ill — they had to find a partner with a similar philosophy which, as it turned out, was the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, a foundation of the Crown.

During the summer of 1994, the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation and Alberta Sport Council were merged and renamed the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Although the Peaceful Valley Project is very much a joint undertaking between Kathleen and Robert Wark, and the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, the agency's new name — Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation — is used throughout the story for reader brevity and clarity.

The establishment of the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge overlooking Alberta's beautiful Battle River Valley is truly an accomplishment worthy of praise.

— *Donna von Hauff, Editor*



The Valley in Autumn

— *Kay Wark*

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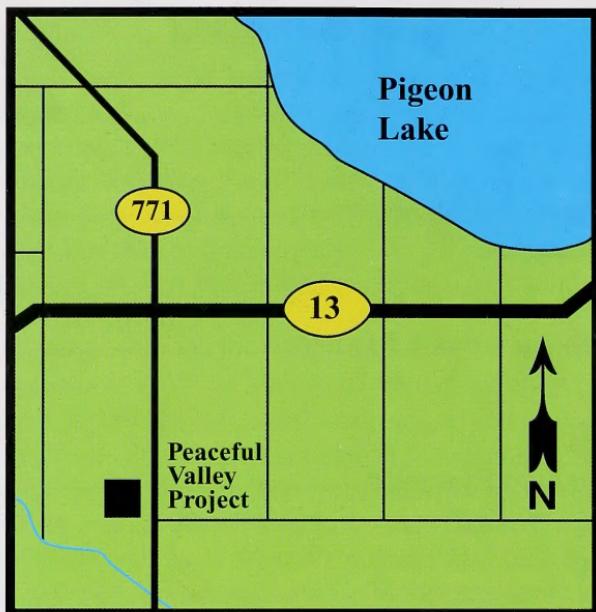
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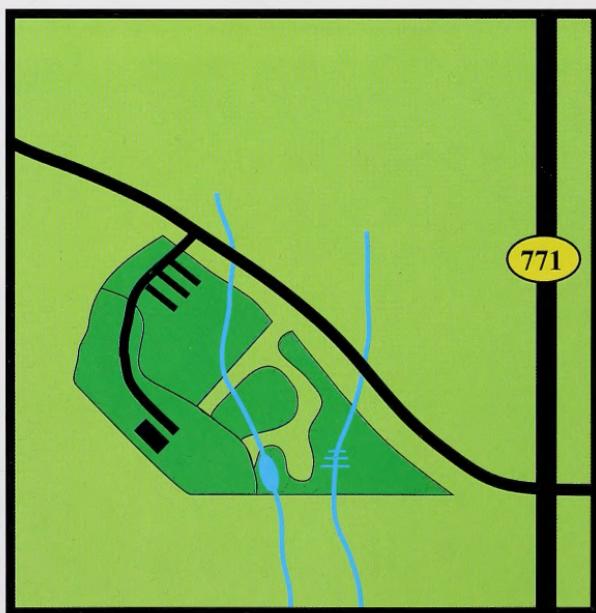
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By car, Peaceful Valley is just over an hour from Edmonton, and almost three hours from Calgary.



Paved secondary highways assure easy access to the site.

CHAPTER

I

FLOWERS AND MEADOWS



One of the two seeds from which the Peaceful Valley Project grew was planted in July of 1980 with no clear sense of purpose at that time other than personal pleasure. The seed was discovered following an unrewarding expedition in search of an antique bathtub for use in the cottage that Kathleen Wark and her brother Bob owned at Pigeon Lake. The structure and its location had given them great pleasure for nearly half a century.

The bathtub was dismal, but the expedition took them west and south of the lake to the Battle

River Valley, close to the headwaters of the river in Battle Lake. It is a beautiful scenic area which Kay and Bob had enjoyed ever since their early summer visits to Pigeon Lake with their parents in the 1930s. The growth in popularity of the lake in post-World War II days made the Battle River Valley — located only a half-dozen miles west — a favorite, idyllic retreat from the crowded beaches during summer weekends.



Prickly Rose — became Alberta's floral emblem in 1930 after it was voted on by school children
— Kay Wark

Returning from the disappointing encounter with the bathtub, Kay and Bob saw a real estate sign for a new subdivision at a crossroads near the Battle River Valley. The road into the subdivision was attractively laid out and inviting. The plan on the sign suggested that a few of the lots might command views over the valley.

The subdivision road ran through a healthy stand of poplar, spruce, birch and other smaller shrubs, handsome but completely obscuring any view of the valley that might exist. Bob stopped the car at the culvert access to one of the lots and set out on foot to explore. After pushing his way through a couple of hundred feet of woodland he came out on a rolling three or four-acre meadow, carpeted with wild flowers and commanding a picture-perfect view of the valley. The Battle River, at this point, was a small stream, meandering through fields dotted with grazing cattle.

Conversation with the real estate agent revealed that the meadow, the only area within the subdivision that had an unobstructed view of the valley, was shared by three separate land parcels, two of which had already been sold. It did not take long for Kay and Bob to decide on a joint purchase of the remaining lot. It seemed the perfect complement to

their Pigeon Lake cottage, by car only ten minutes away. It was a place where they could putter peacefully while enjoying a beautiful rural landscape. From the outset, however, they were aware that the quiet and the spacious view could be seriously impaired at any time if one or both of the neighbors with whom they shared the meadow should decide to build on, or otherwise develop, their portion of that land.

Kay made sure that the owner of the largest of the three parcels, adjoining theirs to the south, knew of their interest. In 1982 he offered the land to them, and his offer was quickly accepted. The last of the three lots was not acquired until 1985, and then with expert and expeditious assistance from Jack Chapman. Jack was a lawyer friend to Kay who provided valuable legal help in the early phases of the

project. His mild-mannered demeanor was a stark contrast to the highly effective telephone tone he used during legal conversations.

Before the last lot was acquired, however, the second of the principal seeds from which the Peaceful Valley Project grew, was planted in Kay's mind. This happened during a brief elevator ride in St. Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital, Edmonton, where she did some volunteer work.

Kay's eye caught a notice posted in the elevator inviting the hospital residents to spend a day in the country at a lake. The notice used a poster of Lake O'Hara as the visual aid to suggest the tranquility of the proposed trip. Kay's curiosity was aroused. A brief discussion with one of the administrators of the hospital revealed that the

intended destination was Pigeon Lake, distinctly less dramatic but much more readily accessible. The discussion also left Kay with the clear impression that the administrators regarded this type of excursion — beyond the walls of the institution — of great importance for the well-being of the infirm and predominantly elderly residents.

On August 17, 1984, Kay and Bob went for their annual picnic around Pigeon Lake. At Vasa Lodge, Johnsonia Beach, they encountered a Lions club bus and, in front of it, approximately thirty elderly people in wheelchairs and blue bonnets, quietly and happily absorbed in the view of the lake from the beach. Kay concluded then and there, and Bob immediately concurred, that the perfect long-term use for the Battle River Valley property was as a day-use facility for the institutionalized elderly disabled and terminally ill.

The property was compact, about twelve acres, but with lots of variety. Two thirds of the land were woods with handsome groves of mature trees. A couple of artesian springs fed two small streams that wound their way through the woods, bubbling over rocks, creating a pond, an interesting marsh area and even a little waterfall. The watercourses

were lined with marsh marigolds that made a fine show in late May and early June. Many other woodland flowers thrived during the summer months. The remaining third of the property was a gently rolling meadow with a different and abundant supply of wildflowers from June through September, and a spectacular view of the Battle River Valley that had originally attracted Bob's attention.

The first person from whom Kay and Bob sought advice was a friend and distinguished recipient of The Order of Canada, Thelma Scambler, who

had a special interest in the care of the elderly. It was in 1985. Thelma's enthusiasm for the idea was immediate and continuing. Two months before her death, in 1988, it was her wish to see the acreage once again. Her advice, viewed in retrospect, in 1995, was uncanny in its accuracy. However, a great deal more had to happen before the Peaceful Valley Project became a reality.

August 15, 1988 . . . The total concept of the Center [Peaceful Valley Day Lodge], to provide older persons with the opportunity of enjoying nature in all its beauty, is of particular value in our age of ever-increasing urbanization and loss of access to natural settings. The outstanding beauties of this particular site, the wild flowers, birds and trees all combine to provide an exceptional view, which will restore and renew so many older persons whose lives are quite circumscribed

. . . The particular location of the site in the central area of Alberta is so valuable for this activity because of the high density of older persons living within a day's drive to and from . . .

— Thelma R. Scambler, OC, CM, SELD

CHAPTER

II

THE SEARCH FOR A PARTNER

K

ay and Bob both realized from the beginning that the creation of a long-range project such as they envisaged called for an affiliation with some type of established organization that could provide continuity. The search for such an entity occupied much of Kay's time during 1986 and 1987.

Fortunately, Kay was retired after a successful career as the accountant for the Alberta Research Council, and she had reasonable discretionary control over her time. Bob was still fully and happily employed as

Curator of the Art Collections at the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino, not far from Los Angeles. He was in Alberta for at least a month each summer but for the rest of the time his contact with the project was by letter, telephone and, eventually, fax.



Bunchberry and Common Pink Wintergreen
— Kay Wark

Kay promoted the idea of Peaceful Valley vigorously and at every opportunity by informing a large circle of friends about what she and Bob were doing. Several of these individuals, especially neighbors at the lake with connections in the closest sizeable city to the property, Wetaskiwin, put her in touch with service clubs and hospital organizations which had a special interest in the care of the elderly.

While two such groups visited the site and gave careful consideration to the concept, for good and sufficient reasons, neither felt able to pursue it. Nevertheless, these experiences led Kay and Bob to realize that they would have to find significant financial support for the venture, beyond a gift of the land itself, before they could expect any organization to take it on. The early realization of this challenge gave energy to their search for a partner.

The productive seed in this search was planted in as seemingly chance and unrelated a way as the initial discovery of the property. In June of 1987, Kay joined a bus tour from Edmonton to Calgary to see a production of "Cats." It was a spur of the moment decision, and she got the last seat on the tour bus. Seated beside her was a lady named Ethel Cuts. When the bus crossed the now mature Battle River near Ponoka, conversation inevitably gravitated to the project. Ethel was interested. More to the point, she suggested that Kay should contact a certain Marion MacCallum in the Alberta government's

October 13, 1988. . . I find that the Peace Hill Home, the Auxiliary Hospital, and the Nursing Home in Wetaskiwin would all make use of it {Peaceful Valley Day Lodge} . . . The Westpine Lodge at Winfield are very interested. Some expressed interest in using the facility 3 or 4 times a year.

— J.W. Montgomery (Wetaskiwin businessman)

Department of Recreation and Parks. The end result being Marion, accompanied by colleague Dale Warick, visited the site in August of 1987.

For this awesome encounter with “The Government,” Kay and Bob made special preparations including the replacement of the distinctly worn curtains on the doors of Bob’s bedroom and bedroom closet at the lake cottage. Happily, Dale and Marion proved much less formidable than imagined.

They were genuinely enthusiastic about the potentialities of the property and they suggested to Kay and Bob that they form their own foundation to provide continuity for the project. Both Kay and Bob recognized this as a possible way to go but, before adopting it, wanted to explore other possible connections with the provincial government.

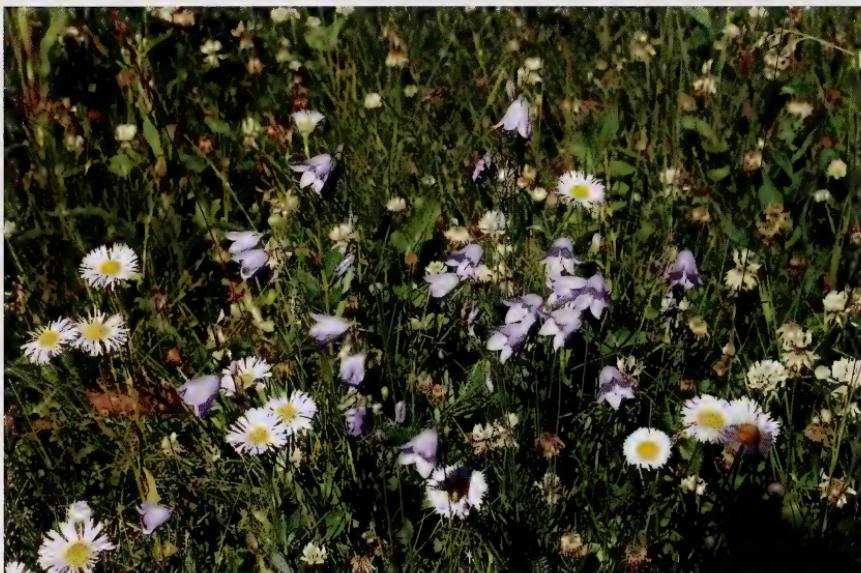
Kay’s own government job had brought her into contact with members of the bureaucracy. At the urging of a former Research Council colleague, Maralyn Shepley, she sought the advice of yet another former member of the Research Council staff, Barry Mellon, then Deputy Minister of the Executive Council.

In approaching Dr. Mellon, Kay wrote a summary letter about the project and the financial commitments she and Bob were by now prepared to make in support of it. Dr. Mellon said he would pass the letter to Michael Faulkner of Alberta Treasury who would make a survey of the government to determine the department with which Kay and Bob should work. He would report back to Kay within two weeks.

On December 7, 1987, Michael Faulkner and Chuck Moser visited Kay at her Edmonton home. Chuck was executive director of the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, a Crown corporation then under the general umbrella of the provincial parks service and, for the intent and purpose of the project, the most likely agency to work with Kay and Bob to realize their goal.

The Foundation-appointed steering committee consisting of Jeanne Ma, Doug Balsden, Fred Wilton, Dale Warick, Chuck Moser, Marion MacCallum and Kathleen Wark dodged fate several times during its first few months. It was only after several tries that a meeting and inspection of the site actually took place on June 13, 1988. Previous arrangements were postponed because of aerial spraying for caterpillars and conflicting government meetings. Nor were the elements cooperative. The first meeting, held at the site, had to be hastily

adjourned after Kay's hot entree because a thunderstorm threatened the condition of the access and other county roads in the immediate vicinity, a constant peril at that time. More than three additional years of active legwork, much of it by Kay, were needed before an agreement with the Foundation and other concerned government agencies could be signed.



Common Bluebells, Tufted Fleabanes, White Clover

— Kay Wark

CHAPTER

III

GATHERING EVIDENCE

K

ay and Bob from the outset imagined Peaceful Valley as catering primarily to the “institutionalized” elderly disabled and terminally ill. They thought of it as a “day-use” facility since overnight stays by such groups would require something approaching an auxiliary hospital on the site. Thus, the potential users would normally be institutions within an approximately sixty mile radius of the site, reaching Edmonton to the north, Red Deer to the south, Wetaskiwin and Camrose to the east, and Winfield, Breton and Drayton Valley to the west.

Kay and Bob had little doubt that this geographic area could supply a steady stream of users from mid-May to mid-October. Their assumptions on this score were reinforced by the opinions of Marion MacCallum and Dale Warick, the two professionals in park administration from the Alberta Parks Service who had given such an encouraging report on the potential of the site.



Tiger Lily

— Kay Wark

Nevertheless, Kay felt strongly, and Bob concurred, that broader and more detailed evidence concerning potential users was needed to support their appeal to the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation for support in the venture.

Accordingly, Kay undertook in 1988 an extensive campaign by mail, telephone and other means of communication to compile a census of the lodges, nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals and senior self-contained apartments within the perimeter that the project was expected to serve. She included a count of the total number of beds and, hence, the total number of individuals involved. The results were impressive and, as they constitute an analysis of the area served, they are worth tabulating.

31	Lodges	1,876 units
26	Nursing Homes	2,842 beds
18	Auxiliary Hospitals	2,022 beds
106	Senior self-contained Apartments	<u>5,809 units</u>
	Total residents:	<u>12,549</u>

Kay also solicited letters of support for the project to be sent to the Foundation. These came from personal friends, professionals concerned with the care of the elderly, as well as from administrators of institutions that were potential users.

In this last solicitation, visits to the site were invited and several took place.

One particularly enthusiastic group of administrators from the Salem Manor in Leduc were so impressed that they returned on August 30, 1988 — just four days after their first visit — with a group of their residents and wheelchairs for a picnic. This was a truly memorable occasion at which both Kay and Bob were fortunately present.

At the time, there were only the most rudimentary facilities including a rustic trail through the woods to the meadow. But the weather was fine and this first group of clientele for which Peaceful Valley was intended thoroughly enjoyed themselves and were reluctant to depart. One of the elderly men said simply, "Just leave me here."

August 26, 1988 . . . The Recreation Therapist and another Recreation Staff member from the Salem Manor Nursing Home have visited the site {Peaceful Valley Day Lodge} and returned with a most enthusiastic report as to the potential that is there... This type of facility would allow residents from nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of the Battle River in a protected environment with trails suited for walkers and wheelchairs.

— Art J. Petrie, BA, CHT, Administrator Salem Manor Nursing Home [Leduc]

The canvassing activity was followed by a questionnaire, prepared by Bob and Kay, and sent out by the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation to all of the potential users located by Kay. Many, she delivered by hand. The questions were concerned not only with potential use but tackled the issue of a structure. There was a good, positive response which answered many questions for Kay and Bob, and the Foundation, and ultimately helped prepare the way for an

agreement between Kay and Bob on the one hand and the government on the other.

Another important event preparatory to an agreement was the visit to the site on August 31, 1990 by the then Minister of Alberta Recreation and Parks, the Honorable Dr. Stephen C. West, with his wife, Marie, and their two young children, Tara and Clayton. Dr. West, a veterinarian by profession, had officiated over the reorganization of the provincial parks system so that it became user directed and people friendly.

The group had a good time tramping around the site, and West was impressed by the evolving partnership between private citizens and the government in

the development of the Peaceful Valley Project. Back at the lake cabin, Tara and Clayton particularly enjoyed Kay's lunch of barbequed beef on a

bun, paying her what their dad said was an unusual compliment of requesting second servings.



Mountain Goldenrod

— *Kay Wark*

CHAPTER

IV

THE AGREEMENT

Bob had always insisted that, before any property changed hands or any significant expenditure of funds, there should be a formal agreement between the donors and the government. In this, he was drawing on his experience in the acceptance of gifts at the Huntington Library where he had spent most of his working career. The basic purpose of an agreement, which is a legal document, is to define what is being given or promised by one party to another, for what purpose, and under what conditions. The agreement seeks to

identify, anticipate, and adjudicate the problems and areas of uncertainty that may exist or arise between the two parties. A good agreement is to the advantage of both parties and serves to eliminate misunderstandings.



Drummond's Thistle

— Kay Wark

August 12, 1988 . . . A facility such as the one being proposed {Peaceful Valley Day Lodge} would certainly hold great potential to add to the quality of life of residents of our facilities, and of the many other long-term care facilities in the area. — Wayne McKendrick, Vice President, Western Operations, Extendicare

Much of the groundwork for the agreement was laid in 1988 and 1989. A particularly important step forward was the identification in 1989 of a spokesperson for the government, through whom Kay and Bob would channel all their concerns and enquiries as events progressed toward the signing of the agreement. This person was Hiske Gerding, a staff member of the Foundation specifically concerned with gifts-in-kind, particularly real estate. Hiske's enthusiasm for the creation of land trusts and, in particular, the Peaceful Valley Project was second only to that of Kay and Bob. Her dedication and energy kept the process moving in spite of the inevitable inertia which conspires against most government agencies. She was vital in pushing forth the agreement including a mad flurry of faxing document drafts between Edmonton and Pasadena during the three months prior to its signing.

The gift of land in a trust arrangement appears remarkably simple after the fact. However, the creation of an applicable and workable document required the diligence and conviction, and patience of the donors and government. Both were fortunate to have two very able attorneys, Cecilia Johnstone in Edmonton, and Bob's attorney, Karl Swaidan, in California.

On August 21, 1991, the agreement was signed by Kathleen Stewart Wark and Robert Rodger Wark, with the Honorable Dr. Stephen C. West, Minister of Alberta Recreation and Parks, and Ritchie Twa,

Chairman of the Board, [Alberta Sport] Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, signing on behalf of the Alberta government. Cecilia Johnstone flew to Edmonton from a meeting in Calgary of the Alberta Bar Association, over which she was presiding, to superintend the signing.

The agreement is a twenty page legal document with much of its contents of no interest to anyone but the contracting parties. According to the terms of the agreement, Kay and Bob transferred title to the three parcels of land constituting the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge to the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. More importantly, they also transferred to the Foundation the title to a very desirable piece of waterfront property on Salt Spring Island,

British Columbia with the understanding that it would be sold and the profits deposited in the Peaceful Valley Trust. Hiske Gerding, who had visited the property earlier that year, presented Kay, Bob and the two other signers of the agreement each with a well-worn, black beach stone as a thoughtful memento of this last transfer of property. Kay and Bob further covenanted to bequeath the residue of their combined estates to an independent trust fund, the income from which was dedicated in perpetuity to the operating expenses of the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge.

As an additional bonus Kay took out a high five-figure life insurance policy payable to the Foundation. She even went so far as to cancel an earlier policy which dropped \$25,000 in face value if she lived beyond 90. The one now in force has no age limit and the annual premium is income tax deductible!

The Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, and Alberta Parks Service assumed responsibility for planning, constructing, operating and maintaining the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge as long as funds were available. The agreement clearly designated the facility as “intended

primarily for elderly residents of lodges, nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals, and senior self-contained apartments and any individuals terminally ill.” Also, the Foundation and the Parks Service agreed to “develop and administer the Peaceful Valley Project in a manner designed to enhance the beauty of the said lands without seriously altering its existing natural beauty... The principal lodge, provided the functioning of this structure is not impeded, should have an exterior and interior appearance suggestive of a cabin or chalet suitable to host the interested clientele.”

Mindful of the interests of the other residents of the subdivision whose lands did not offer a view comparable

to that from the lodge site, the agreement stipulated that “residents within the subdivision in which the said lands are located shall have pedestrian access... when such access does not interfere with the basic functioning of the Peaceful Valley Project . . .”

Provision was made for the establishment of an advisory committee “. . . whose mandate shall be to promote the welfare of the Peaceful Valley Project, to raise funds for the Peaceful



Ritchie Twa, Bob Wark, Kay Wark, Dr. Stephen C. West, agreement signing, August 21, 1991

— Alberta Public Affairs

Valley Trust . . . and to advise the Foundation on the administration of the Peaceful Valley Project from time to time." One resident of the subdivision was to be appointed to the advisory committee.

The agreement also performed the useful function of establishing the legal names by which the place was to be

known. "The Peaceful Valley Project" was the name for the process and means by which the place, "The Peaceful Valley Day Lodge," came into being and was maintained.

Incidentally, the name "Peaceful Valley" was not chosen by Kay and Bob. They were the words by which the general area had been known ever since early in the 20th century when Superintendent Mr. J. Scoffield of the Wetaskiwin School District appropriately applied them to the site.

October 6, 1988 . . . Two members of the Board of Directors inspected this property {Peaceful Valley Day Lodge} and were much impressed with its beauty, its suitability, and its accessibility for the purpose intended. Speaking for the membership of the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired, which numbers some 4,000 seniors, the Board recommends the [Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife] Foundation proceed with this project and make it available to as many seniors, especially handicapped seniors, as possible.

— H. Wilson, President, The Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired

Peaceful Valley 24



A pristine pond, after . . .

— Kay Wark



. . . an unsuspecting couple from Ma-Me-O Beach, Elizabeth and Chips Reid, were lured over to the acreage to help get things started!

— Kay Wark

CHAPTER

V

INTERLUDE



While the developments described in the preceding four chapters of this story were taking place, what was actually happening on those three Peaceful Valley parcels of land between the time Kay and Bob bought them in the early 1980s and that day in August 1991 when they gave them to the government? The land was, in fact, being enjoyed by Kay and Bob. The property had fulfilled their hopes for a quiet refuge away from the weekend crowds at Pigeon Lake. The work Kay and Bob did themselves on the land could be described

as “puttering.” No harm was done. The landscape was left virtually unaltered. The fruits of their labor, and those who labored with them were, however, quite apparent by the time the land was turned over to the government.



Purple Wild Pea Vine

— Kay Wark

Kay and Bob planted a number of trees, mostly taken from the Pigeon Lake property as well as a few seedling lodgepole pine Kay found in the ditches of secondary roads in the neighborhood. In addition to finding and planting the seedlings, she nursed them through their first few years by giving them water during dry periods in the summers, and protecting them with netting from unusually ravenous plagues of grasshoppers and tent caterpillars, hungry deer and rabbits. In these worthwhile tasks she was often assisted, especially when Bob was in California, by friends from Edmonton who also enjoyed puttering in the country.

A Pigeon Lake neighbor, Moira Hegarty, became almost an inhabitant of the acreage. She loved to fly her kite on the meadow, taking advantage — like the somewhat suspicious pair of hawks that circled above — of the strong updraft from the valley. She brought all her lake visitors to see the place. Moira was always ready to go after Kay if she did not return from a

solo visit to the acreage by the prearranged time. Moira hoped in due course to teach the wheelchair visitors to the Peaceful Valley how they too could fly kites. But alas, she did not live to enjoy that satisfaction.

To deal with the grass on the access trail from the subdivision road through the woods to the meadow, Kay acquired a scythe, and actually received some instruction in its use. But a gasoline driven weed cutter, usually operated by Bob, proved much more effective. Bob, at Kay's urging, also built a simple bench of railroad ties and two-by-fours on a viewpoint of each of the three parcels of land as each was acquired. It was amusing to note, as the years went by, that each new bench was set

Thanks again for providing such a nice place for the use of the elderly and disabled — as well as the residents of the subdivision.

— Beth Venance in her Christmas card of 1994 to Kay and Bob

an inch or two higher from the ground than its predecessor.

A neighboring farmer, Harold Kijewski, often assisted by his wife Doreen, brought in their big mowing equipment once a year, usually in late August or early September after most of the wildflowers were finished, and mowed and raked the grass, clover, and alfalfa off the meadow. Soon another neighbor, Oliver Venance, whose family property adjoined the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge to the north, and who had a power mower, volunteered to cut the paths that had taken form around the perimeter of the meadow. He and his guests had established a comfortable routine of walking the paths in the evenings.

The Kijewskis, and others equipped with sturdy wading boots, worked on removing the dead-fall that had badly clogged the little pond



*Pieter van der Schoot and his son Pieter,
August 1991* — Hiske Gerdink

formed by one of the creeks through the property. Dealing with the considerable amount of dead-fall elsewhere was a problem handled expeditiously and expertly by Pieter van der Schoot. Pieter brought his many talents, particularly forest management, to the property from 1990 onward.

Assisted by his two stalwart teenage sons, they accomplished minor miracles in getting rid of quantities of undesirable material with judgment and taste, knowing instinctively, it seemed, what to take away and what to leave so that the woods retained a

natural appearance. What they took out onto the right-of-way of the subdivision road made a pile 30 feet long, 10 feet high, and 10 feet deep. Pieter burned it all with a blow torch, choosing to do so during a steady day-long rain in order to eliminate any danger of the fire spreading.

Pieter was particularly gifted in suggesting routes for the wheelchair paths through the woods, saving mature and promising trees, and creating interesting vistas. While most of the detailed planning and all of the construction of these paths took place after the signing of the agreement, there was much general

consideration given in advance to the lay of the land and its eventual usage. Tremendous thought was put into the placement of the access road by which buses would enter the property, the wheelchair and pedestrian paths, the location of the lodge building and other secondary buildings, and the best spot for the parking area so that buses and other vehicles would not be visually obtrusive.



Pieter van der Schoot and deadfall removed from the acreage to be burned, May 9, 1991

— Hiske Gerdung



*Concept committee at acreage, May 9, 1991.
Pieter van der Schoot,
Gordon Haggerty*

—Hiske Gerdung

A general concept plan for the whole site, which preceded the agreement and was included in it, was developed in 1991 by an ad hoc committee of which the key person was Gordon Haggerty, a ground survey engineer. Gordon's plan incorporated the interests and needs of the Foundation (Hiske Gerding), Alberta Parks Service (Fred Wilton), the donors (Kay and Bob Wark) and the *in situ* forester, Pieter van der Schoot. The plan included a complete contour survey of the property which became crucial information for later construction. Gordon also suggested swinging the main access road around the northern end of the site, a perceptive and sensitive suggestion that became the basis for the future road.

August 12 1988 . . . The Greater Edmonton Foundation operates fourteen lodges, seven self-contained apartment projects and several cottage home complexes for over 2000 senior citizens. I am convinced that this kind of project would be very popular with our residents. All of them are independent in activities of daily living, and a majority of them are physically active . . . The location of the project {Peaceful Valley Day Lodge} . . . would ensure ready access to all parts of the property for Edmonton's senior citizens and would enhance their quality of life . . .

— David E. Foley, Executive Director,
Greater Edmonton Foundation

Peaceful Valley 30



Bunchberries at campsite

— Kay Wark

CHAPTER

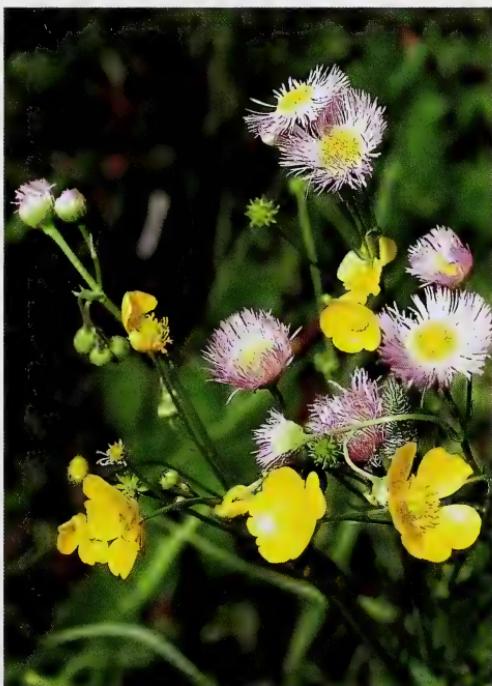
VI

PLANNING, MONEY, CONSTRUCTION

The signing of the agreement set the stage for the final phases of planning as well as for fundraising and actual construction. It also brought two new characters onto the stage.

According to the agreement, planning and construction was the responsibility of the Parks Service and fundraising was to be directed by the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Theoretically, Kay and Bob had few responsibilities in this phase of the project. They had given the property to the Foundation, their wishes

concerning its use were incorporated in the agreement, and their provisions for further financial support to the Peaceful Valley Project were also set forth in the agreement.



Tall Buttercup and Smooth Fleabane
— Kay Wark

In fact, however, Kay and Bob, at the invitation of the Foundation and the Parks Service, remained as much involved as before, primarily because this phase of the project was set against a background of serious, widespread economic recession, and a new provincial government whose *raison d'être* was to reduce the provincial debt through restraint and reduction. These factors: planning, construction, fundraising and the chilly economic climate were closely interwoven but, in order to achieve some measure of clarity in this discussion, they are arbitrarily separated.

As for planning, the principal decisions needing to be made concerned the placement of the access road and wheelchair paths, their physical construction, and the placement, design and construction of the lodge building. The parks

person in charge of these matters was Derry Armstrong, Regional Planner for the Alberta Parks Service in the West Central Region Office at Rimbey, a town about forty miles south of the site and the closest regional office to the site. Derry brought energy, experience and a lively interest to the project. In time, he also brought an independent architect, John Hull, with whom Derry had worked on other projects and who quickly proved to be imaginative and sympathetic in the design proposals he drew up for the lodge building.

June 22, 1988 . . . The proposed site {Peaceful Valley Day Lodge} is almost idyllic and, I think, highly suited to the proposed purposes . . . I do hope your feasibility study will look favorably upon the proposal. It represents a remarkable opportunity to acquire a physical asset highly appropriate to the needs of the ambulatory elderly citizens.

— S. G. McLeod, MD President,
Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research

July 18, 1988 . . . The interesting variety of terrain in a small area makes this property ideal for day use by seniors . . . {They} will find themselves living a day in the country with attractive walks offering the joy of trees, flowers, streams, open fields {all} in a natural setting. And the view over the valley breathes serenity.

— Catherine Dunlap

The first task to be tackled was the permanent access road which basically needed to be completed before the construction equipment could be brought in. As the same contractor would also be used for the wheelchair paths, these and the access road were planned as a simultaneous action.

After some discussion, the route chosen for the road was essentially the same one proposed earlier by Gordon Haggerty, who had prepared the ground survey of the site in 1991. It was not the shortest possible route but provided an attractive, scenic entrance to the property, curving

through the woods and emerging onto the meadow at the north end, offering a fine view to the southwest, including the site of the lodge building and the valley behind. It also was the route chosen by an engineer who was fully aware of the contours of the land and problems of run-off and drainage.

The routes chosen for the approximately one mile of wheelchair paths also utilized suggestions made by Haggerty and other members of the 1991 ad hoc committee. Derry Armstrong made some adjustments to insure that the gradients were all manageable by wheelchairs. Pieter van der Schoot undertook the arduous but highly important task of clearing the brush and trees from the ten-foot wide routes the paths were to follow. He also fine-tuned the edges to preserve the best trees and shrubs while creating interesting vistas.



North Trail: June, 1993 — Kay Wark

The road was constructed to standard gravel highway specifications. The base was neatly excavated and filled with three layers of compacted gravel, the coarsest on the bottom, the finest forming the top surface.

The trail construction followed a similar scheme, again with neatly excavated edges but with a top surface of crushed, compacted shale.

This surface was sufficiently smooth and firm for wheelchairs and one which could be easily reformed and rolled when needed. It also proved to be an attractive terra-cotta color against the varied greens of the woodland and meadow. The choice of this material for the top layer was the result of much deliberation by Kay and Bob, and the thoughts of many others collected over the years.

The road and trails went in during the autumn of 1993 and spring of 1994. They were the first of the regular amenities on the site to be completed.

Kay and Bob, and everyone else was delighted with the result which seemed to speak well for the rest of the construction.

The completion of the paths was celebrated in July of 1994 by an energetic and cheerful picnic at which the

Edmonton Glenora Rotary Club's members presented six benches, placed along the paths with guidance from Doug Pilkington of Parks Service. The group was joined by several neighbors on or near the subdivision — Beth Venance (Oliver was mowing grass elsewhere), Pat and Steve Evanoff, Eda and Ed Satre with members of their family. The permanent installation of a handsome, two-unit chemical toilet with disabled access was completed by the Parks Service in time for this event. The Rotarians' mode of transportation to the event was rather impressive. The women arrived in a black, stretch limousine, courtesy of an Edmonton funeral parlor with which one of them was associated!

The planning of the lodge building was a far more protracted process. Its basic position on the



North Trail: July, 1994 — Kay Wark

site was determined before the planning and construction of the access road. Two basic options for the lodge site were considered, each with its own merits and limitations. Kay and Bob had initially favored a position at the north end of the meadow on a small knoll that commanded a deep view down the length of the meadow and continuing on to the valley below.

June 24, 1988 . . . The dream that envisions this choice location {Peaceful Valley Day Lodge} as the setting for seniors' outings is exciting, especially when the imaginative dream has been supported by careful and extensive investigation and research. A day there would be a treat for anyone. For seniors whose world is bounded by the walls and corridors of even the best of health care institutions, it would be especially valuable and something to relive many times.

— Delcie J. Gray



Derry Armstrong of Rimbev Parks Office and Kay enjoy some refreshments during construction of the access road.

— Catherine Dunlap



Diana Clark, Catherine Dunlap, Audrey Clark, October 1993 — Kay Wark



Kay close to the same location, July 1994

— Bob Wark



Meadow and wheelchair path, June 1994

— Kay Wark

The other position was on the forward center edge of the meadow looking across the valley with additional views extending both north and south. The centrality of this position appealed to many people, and in due course Kay and Bob came around to sharing this preference.

The lodge building had two basic purposes: to provide shelter for visiting groups to eat lunch if they preferred to be inside rather than out; and to supply several modern, running water washrooms. It was also determined that the building should have a small catering kitchen. The expectation was that most visiting groups would bring their own lunch but, on occasion, may need to warm

up food or beverages. It was also thought that the Foundation or Parks Service might wish to host functions in the building. Additionally, the nursing home administrators consulted about the project suggested the building have some space for emergency first aid. Those were the basic space requirements.

The agreement stipulated that the building, both inside and out, was to have a rustic or chalet-like



Rotary picnic with limousine, July, 1994

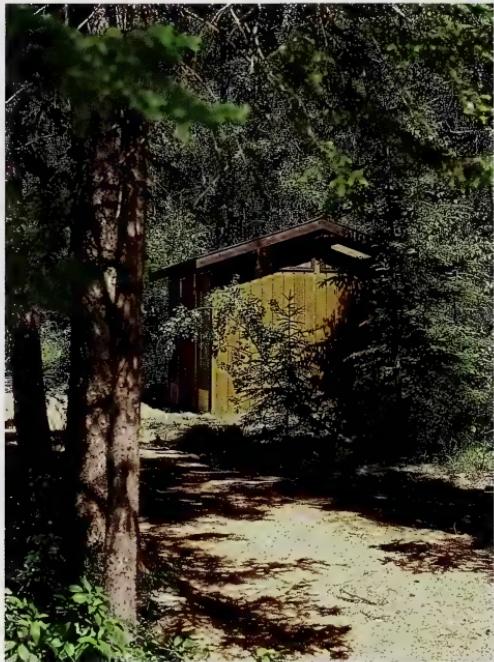
— Kay Wark

appearance. The hope on this score was that the place would suggest the country and be a distinct change from the somewhat antiseptic interiors of most of the institutional homes from which the visitors were coming.

John Hull submitted his first concept sketches for the lodge to Hiske Gerdin. Derry Armstrong, Kay and Bob in the summer of 1993. He had a fresh but appropriate and attractive approach to the general appearance of the building. Without

attempting a precise duplication, he introduced several elements reminiscent of the "craftsman style" bungalow popular throughout much of America in the early 20th century.

The design incorporated lots of natural wood surfaces and a considerable amount of fieldstone both inside and out, and a broad but low roof-line that related the building to the ground. All this had a gently nostalgic, homey quality that seemed entirely appropriate. John met all the space requirements in generous fashion, and added a small suite for a resident manager and a screened in porch for those who wanted to be outside but free of insects.



Housy-Housy; Outdoor Toilet, June, 94
— Kay Wark

It was a handsome building, but one designed with only secondary concern for economy. The insistent question, not really to be answered for almost a year, was: Can we afford it? While waiting for the answer to come, let us turn to a consideration of the financial position of the project.

The agreement ushered in promotion and fund-raising which could not be pursued with any conviction until that document was signed.



Housy-Housy; Outdoor Toilet, July, 1994

— Audrey Clark



"Year of the Paths," Christmas Card, 1994

— Stan Dykstra

The event received considerable attention in the *Edmonton Journal*, alerting a wide audience to the existence of the project. On the day after the signing, there was a charming small lunch party at a retirement home in south Edmonton. It was attended by officials of both the Foundation and Alberta Parks Service and a delightful, longtime friend of Kay's, Annie Roberts, who presented a substantial four-figure cheque to the Foundation. It was also on this occasion that Kay and Bob first met Dave Chabillon, Assistant

Deputy Minister, Alberta Environmental Protection, Parks Service, an important person in the subsequent development of the Peaceful Valley Project. Dave presented to Bob two miniature blank books from Kew Gardens with the suggestion that Bob might use them to write instructions to the Alberta Parks Service for the care of the



Pouring the basement, October 1994

— Pat Evanoff

July 4, 1988 . . . I {Verne} have in the past acted as a bus driver for Extendicare/Leduc, taking residents on day trips to shopping malls and day parks. The enjoyment the residents received from these day trips is remarkable. Just "getting out" gives them a lift in spirit and something to look forward to.

— Maralyn and Verne Shepley

Peaceful Valley site
(perhaps a double-edged, good-humored hint!)

The Foundation did very well in the sale of the Salt Spring property. Thanks to Kay, who furnished a list of people who had shown an interest in it, the agency was able to sell it by sealed bids without going to the expense of engaging a realtor. The property was officially appraised at \$140,000 and the winning bid was for significantly more than that. Interestingly, the property was sold to a friend of Kay's and Bob's who had been their paper boy much

earlier in life, had a successful medical career in Vancouver, and now was looking for a place to retire in the Gulf Islands.

Hiske did not, however, regard this money as something to be spent on capital expenditures. Rather, she preferred to reserve most of it to provide income for annual operating expenses. While the bequests promised by Kay and Bob in the agreement would eventually provide endowment for this purpose, Hiske correctly assessed that she did not know when that money would come or how much of it there would be at that time.

At the urging of Kay and Bob, the Foundation paid for the printing of a small promotional brochure about the project with photographs by Kay and text by Bob. This brochure was probably the most effective single



Supports for the first floor, November, 1994

—Pat Evanoff

means of attracting attention to the project. It enjoyed wide distribution and brought forth a considerable number of gifts.

An unlikely, but crucial, source of further financial support proved to be Bob's TIAA-CREF pension on which he started to draw in 1990. The portion of the pension invested in stocks rose substantially in value over the years, and there was no place Bob would rather put the excess income than into the project. He did, however, ask the Foundation to match the first two of his five-

figure gifts with fresh funds from other sources of which a generous one proved to be the Foundation itself. Without these substantial infusions, further work on the project would likely have awaited the bequests from Kay and Bob.

In February of 1994 and with the time approaching for John's working drawings of the lodge to be sent out for bids, a



Shira Moonie, January 1995

— Doris Moonie

senior member of the Parks Service decided that the building as planned was both larger in size and more elaborate in detail than needed for its purpose. This seemed especially true after a decision was made to place the day-to-day management and maintenance of the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge in the hands of the Alberta Parks Service crew, permanently based

a few miles to the north at Pigeon Lake Provincial Park.

The live-in manager's suite and the screened-in porch departed. Even so, when the revised working drawings went out for bids in late summer of 1994, the tenders that came back were distinctly, although not outrageously, above budget. Derry and John were able to work with an interested contractor, Derryl Toews, of Wetaskiwin, to bring his bid down to budget. This was achieved primarily by the elimination of many surface features which could be put back into the

building over the years as funds became available, but which allowed the building to be used in the meantime for the purpose intended.

It was on this basis that construction went forward. The ground breaking on October 19, 1994 was an important but simple occasion attended by Kay (Bob was back in California), Hiske Gerdig, Derry Armstrong and his assistant, Myron Yachimec,

Derryl Toews and other members of the contractor's crew.

Thanks to the chauffeuring services of Hiske, Kay had another opportunity on November 4 to inspect the excavation and progress on the building's foundation.

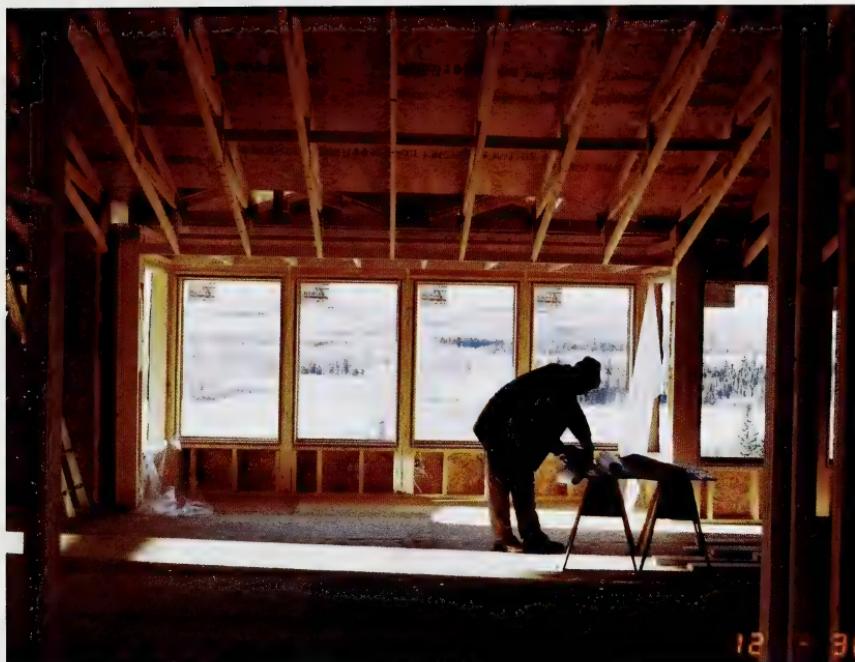


Original sketch of the complete Peaceful Valley Day Lodge.

— John Hull

June 19, 1988 . . . I am personally very familiar with the site in question having visited it and enjoyed picnics there for many years. Without question, it is a site that offers one of the most beautiful views of virtually unspoiled land in the area; and while I hope so much it will remain unspoiled, I see no better way for it now to be enjoyed and 'savored' by people who would truly appreciate it than by placing on it a suitable, well-organized and well-cared-for center such as that proposed.

— Elizabeth A. Bishop



Workman in the living room, February 1995

—Derry Armstrong

On this occasion they were joined by Mary Ellen Haggerty, the recently widowed wife of Gordon Haggerty, who had played an important role in the creation of the initial concept plan for the site. Kay left on December 1 to join Bob in California for four months. During that time they both were kept abreast of the construction by phone

calls and letters from friends. They also kept tabs on Alberta's weather by periodically calling the Edmonton weather office for the recorded forecast. The contractor seemed to have been fortunate on that score, at least through January.

Hiske reported by telephone on January 9 that the sub-floor was laid and the wall studs were up. Pat Evanoff, the neighbor living just across the subdivision road from the project, told Kay by phone on February 1 that the building was then



Lodge interior, front windows, 1995

— Catherine Dunlap

basically enclosed, with windows and doors going in, and gas to be brought in within the next few days.

The first visual evidence concerning the progress of construction arrived on February 13. Two friends, Doris and George Moonie, who had a cabin on Pigeon Lake that they used throughout the year, sent a packet of photographs detailing the construction as seen on two visits to the site on January 7 and February 4. The hands down winner in the first group showed their big, friendly dog, Shira, seen from behind, admiring the view of the valley through the studs that

would eventually support the windows overlooking the valley. The shot, in addition to establishing Shira as a connoisseur of rural views, also demonstrated as everyone hoped would be true that the floor behind those windows was high enough above the ground level to command a full view of the Battle River Valley below.

The February 4 shots showed the exterior of

the building fully enclosed. The structure looked just as one hoped and expected it would, with a roof-line that related it to the contours of the land and the sought-for indigenous appearance of belonging.

A few days later eight photographs, four each of the exterior and interior, arrived from Derry Armstrong of

Alberta Parks Service. The interior shots were particularly interesting for information about the roof construction, concerning which Kay and Bob had no previous visual information.

The largest group of photographs, and the most explicit in documenting the progress of the construction, reached California on March 7. These were taken by the same close neighbors living near the site, the Evanoffs, with whom Kay had been in touch by phone about a month earlier.



Working on the roof on cold winter's day, January 1995

— Pat Evanoff



Lodge exterior, southern view, 1995

— Audrey Clark

The twenty-five shots they sent provided a detailed visual record from the arrival of the first construction equipment on the site in October, through the excavation and construction of the basement, the framing of the walls and the roof, the enclosure of the space, including the doors and windows, to the day at the end of February when the basement furnace was first turned on. They were photos taken with a good eye for construction details, and were in all respects comfortably reassuring to Kay and Bob, about 1500 miles away and in a totally different environment.

There was a pause in construction during most of March, awaiting a fresh infusion of funds promised for April 1. When construction resumed, much of it was concerned with essential but less visible matters such as the installation of the sewage and water system; completion of the heating and electrical systems; defining the interior spaces and

supporting the insulation with drywall. More conspicuous was the application of the

exterior siding, and the construction of the decks for outdoor wheelchair use at the north and south ends of the building.



Lodge exterior, front view, 1995

— Audrey Clark

June 13, 1988 . . . The natural beauty of this property has impressed me. I remember the wild flowers, the expanse of sky, and the deer which allowed me to take his photograph. Preservation of this unspoiled piece of Alberta is important . . . Establishment of a day facility on this property will enable many of us senior citizens to enjoy the revitalizing sensations of fresh air in a naturally beautiful and historic setting.

— Louise Nordin



Lodge and access road, 1995

— Catherine Dunlap

On June 15, 1995, Bob flew up to Edmonton from Los Angeles for the first of two summer visits, each between four and five weeks. Both were busy but happy times concerned with finish surfaces and other details of the building, as well as plans for the official opening of the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge in the summer of 1996. Matters receiving special attention were the transportation and placement of a large red granite boulder, found by Pieter van der Schoot on his land, donated by him,

and eventually moved under his supervision. It was intended to carry a bronze plaque commemorating the purpose and initial gift of land and other support toward the establishment of the project by Kay and Bob, gifts made in memory of their parents. Attention was also given to the best form for this book: how to make it interesting



Kay, Bob and Shira Moonie, 1995

— Doris Moonie

and visually attractive while also satisfying the curiosity of those historians and antiquarians in the future who might wish to know how the project, unusual and innovative in many ways, came to be.

In dealing with the production of the book, Kay and Bob worked closely with a friend, also a professional editor and writer, Donna von Hauff, who made many excellent suggestions, and in due course assumed the arduous task of seeing the book through the press.

A great moment of the summer was the first visit Kay and Bob made to the nearly finished lodge building on Sunday, June 18. As mentioned previously, they had been kept abreast of the progress by numerous photos from friends. The exterior looked just as handsome as they had expected. But photos could not prepare them for the light, airy quality of the interior that was dominated by a truly spectacular view of the valley. That same panorama gripped the spectator's attention from the moment of first entering the front door, and drew the visitor into the principal space which was further enhanced by the unifying effect of ceilings that

followed the simple but sheltering contours of the roof above. The architect and contractor had both done fine jobs.

By the end of the summer of 1995, plans were complete for the official opening in June of 1996. Much leg work remained to be done before then — finishing details of the building; regrading and landscaping of the surrounding land; implementing decisions concerning the number and nature of the initial "open-house" events. But, as far as thinking and planning were concerned, the first phase of the Peaceful Valley Project was over. What now beckoned for attention was the second and open-ended phase — the use of the Peaceful Valley Day Lodge by those for whom all the previous planning and construction had been intended.



Bob studying an Orange Hawkweed, June, 1994

— Kay Wark

Peaceful Valley 56



The walking trail in September

— Kay Wark

APPENDIX

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PEACEFUL VALLEY DAY LODGE



We would like to thank the many contributors to this project, whose participation made our dreams a reality. This section of the book is complemented with available photos of selected events, but in no way suggests favorites! We have also included some of the flower photography from Kay's collection, a sample of the beautiful flora one will find in Peaceful Valley.



Common Bluebells, July, 1981

— Kay Wark

Alberta Parks Service - Management Support Staff
Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation
Janet J. Alexander
Anonymous
Allan & Nita Barker
Battle Lake Ladies Club
Jean & Jamie Belyea
Mabel Betts
Claude & Mae Brennan
Lois & Philip Brown
C.S. & Anne Campbell
Audrey M. Clark
Mr. & Mrs. R.B. Colborne
Russell & Karen Cook
Ethel Cuts
Catherine Dunlap



Marsh Marigolds, May 1990

— Kay Wark

Ian Dunlap
Sylvia Evans
Eldon Foote
Norma Freifield
Hiske Gering
Victor & Mary Graham
Delcie Gray
Lorna Heiberg
Gerald & Miriam Hutchinson
Independent Order of Foresters
Frederick & Nancy Johnson
Dr. Lorene Kennedy
Donald & Mary Louise Lang
Thelma Levy
Robert & Kathleen Mals



Dave Chabillon, (Assistant Deputy Minister, Alberta Parks Service), presenting two miniature books for notes on property maintenance to Bob, while Hiske Gerding looks on, 1991 — Alberta Public Affairs

D.K. & C.G. McElroy
Jack McIlveen
Lionel & Barbara McLeod
James Montgomery
George & Doris M. Moonie
Louise Nordin
Brian & Belva Piercy
Robert & Frances Reynolds
Annie Roberts
John S. Roper
Rotary Club of Edmonton Glenora
Brian & Jean Shields
Alfreda Skenfield
Freda Smith
Elva Taylor



Annie C. Roberts presenting her cheque to Julian J. Nowicki, then Deputy Minister, Alberta Recreation and Parks, 1991
— Alberta Public Affairs

The Salem Manor Society

The Trekkers

Kathleen S. Wark

Robert R. Wark

Paul & Rachel Weinstein

Jean & Ernie Wiggins

Irma Young

Memorial Donations:

Ethel Cuts

Gordon Haggerty

Mona Hegarty

Frank Kingzett

J.R. Levy

Margaret Lipsey Johnson

Dr. Lionel McLeod

Vaughan Monson

Rhona Want



Blue Eyed Grass and Buttercups, June 1991

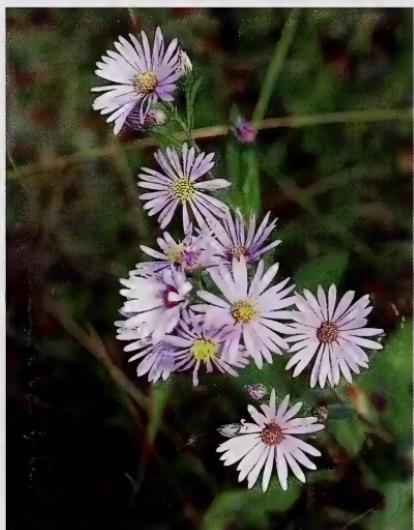
— Kay Wark

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Independent Order of Foresters present their five figure cheque to the Peaceful Valley Project. Fraser Armstrong, Kay Wark, Hiske Gerdink, Maureen Morrison, September, 1995

— Joy Dykstra



Aster

— Kay Wark



Wild Strawberries — Kay Wark

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